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**SPECIAL ISSUE**

**PEOPLE**

# Contention and Continuity

**From the U.S. and abroad, views on the charter's merits and shortcomings**

*Since the Constitution was drafted, Americans have been engaged in an ongoing, often heated debate about its meaning and value. Both in the U.S. and abroad, students of democracy have puzzled over the document's contradictory roles as the chief focus of*

*contention and the enduring symbol of cultural and political unity. To sample present opinion, TIME asked notables in the U.S. and other countries to assess the Constitution's merits and shortcomings and to suggest ways that it could be changed. Their replies:*



**William Colby**  
Former director  
of the CIA

I became most involved with the Constitution when dealing with the question of how you run a secret intelligence agency in a democracy—which led to the very comprehensive investigations of 1975. We had to work out methods for conducting our activities in consultation with the Congress. I think it's been very successful. We're the only country in the world that runs our intelligence service under the Constitution rather than outside it.